

Lambda Letters Project

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Join our E-mail Alert Team

Lavender Library, Archives
and Cultural Exchange
Sacramento, CA

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

Our members send lots of mail to our legislators by way of the Post Office. No matter how helpful that is, there is an inevitable delay between the time that Lambda Letters' staff choose topics for those letters and the time that the letters actually arrive in the legislators' offices. Our postal system is great when we know long in advance when a bill will be voted on.

However, as slow as the legislative process is much of the time, it can move like greased lightning at other times. Often we discover that a bill will be voted on in just three days. To meet the need for immediate input to legislators on those bills, Lambda Letters has built a highly effective e-mail alert system. Using this system we can put background information and sample letters in the hands of our members one day, and their e-mailed letters can arrive in legislators' offices the very next day. The system is not only fast, but it has enabled us to get huge volumes of mail to legislators. For example, in 2002 our legislators received over 186,000 e-mailed letters from our members.

The format of our e-mail alerts is similar to what people get in this newsletter and sample letters sent

Continued on page 9

Hinman Nominated for Major Award

by Lori Norman, LLP Chair

Dennis Mangers, a former state legislator and current lobbyist, has nominated the Lambda Letters Project's chief lobbyist, Boyce Hinman, for a Ford Foundation Leadership for a Changing World Award. The award is made to people who meet several criteria, including tackling tough social problems with effective systemic solutions; exhibiting strategic leadership; getting results; bringing different groups together; inspiring others to believe they can make a difference; being largely unrecognized outside their field or community, but who, if recognized, would inspire many others; and building leadership in the community. Recipients are also people from whom one can learn important lessons and who want to learn from others.

Hinman founded the Project in 1989 and has led it ever since. His response to the news of his nomination was typically understated. He said he is always a little embarrassed when praised. He feels like he is just doing his job and that his job is the best one he has ever had. If Hinman wins the award, Lambda Letters will receive \$100,000 plus \$30,000 in training. Winners are expected to be announced in midsummer 2003. We will keep you informed on this exciting prospect. ###

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters & Messages Collected

November, 2002	2,815 letters & e-mails
In all of 2002	209,416 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent

November, 2002	\$5,995
In all of 2002	\$48,632

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Mission Statement

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy, and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered and intersex persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in American society.

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Publication of the name of any person or organization in articles or advertising in the Lambda Letters Project newsletter is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such person or organization. The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists. The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly, except in December, by Lambda Letters Project Inc., 6529 Cowboy Way, Citrus Heights, CA 95621.

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Advertising Rates (per Issue)

Business-card sized ads (3½"x2") \$10, quarter-page ads \$30, third-page ads \$33, half-page ads \$45, full-page ads \$75, full back-page ad \$100. Deadline for payment and camera-ready copy, along with your name and phone number, is the 25th of each month.

☐ Yes, I want to make a donation to help LLP continue its important work. (Appreciated but not required.)

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Discrimination Complaints

Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave? If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684. In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212. The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

Stop the Slash and Burn of Homeless Programs

by Adrienne Lauby, Women's Analyst

Governor Davis has proposed cutting the budget for homeless programs by \$1.3 million over the coming year. This is more than a quarter of the \$4 million currently allotted. The governor is attempting to balance the budget by taking hope from those without a home.

The public face of the homeless is that of a man begging or sleeping on a city sidewalk. Most of us can also visualize a woman pushing an overflowing shopping cart, a soup kitchen line, or a concrete room crowded with shelter cots. Behind these images, the picture is more complex.

According to the National Coalition on Homelessness (www.nationalhomeless.org), 25 percent of the urban homeless are children under 18. In rural areas, most of the homeless are families, single mothers, and children. A disproportionate number of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth are homeless. Where do these people live? What is their daily life like?

I know a woman (I'll call her Chris) who spent most of her young adult life without a home. I don't know what originally happened to Chris. She's a young lesbian who never dresses or acts to please a man, and I assume that had something to do with it. Chris often went to a local storefront office that welcomed homeless women. There she used the toilet, picked up mail, made local phone calls, and talked to people who understood what her life was like.

It's easy to take some things for granted—a phone, an address, a bathroom—yet how can anyone maintain and improve his or her life without them?

Governor Davis' plan is slash-and-burn budget cutting. Such large abrupt cuts will take a terrible toll on soup kitchens and shelters. They will also put an end to many small programs like the storefront that kept Chris afloat until she was able to get into a small apartment early this year.

Please tell your representatives that you oppose these devastating cuts.

###

Support Healthcare Programs

by Jamie E. Shauvin, AIDS Analyst

State law requires a balanced budget. The budget can be balanced by either increasing taxes, cutting expenses, or doing a combination of both. This month we ask you to write your state senator and ask him or her to resist balancing the state budget by reducing funding for healthcare programs that support those with HIV/AIDS in California. The proposed budget cuts sent to the legislature by Governor Davis include *no* cuts in AIDS funding. We need to be sure the legislature keeps it that way.

Please ask your senator to deal with the budget crisis by increasing income taxes for California's wealthiest citizens.

California and the nation have made immense progress in fighting AIDS. There are now up to 17 different combinations of medications that can be used to suppress HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. There is every reason to believe that if a person follows the medication regime he or she can live a normal healthy life. However, in order to do so, it is absolutely essential that people take their medicines every day—in fact several times a day, as recommended by their doctors.

Many people in California are poor and dependent on state-funded programs, such as the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, to pay for their medications. If AIDS funding is cut, many of them will be forced to stop taking their medications. That would be cruel in the extreme. We must not let that happen. Please urge your senator to oppose any cuts in the state's AIDS budget.

###

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Support Transgender Addition to ENDA

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

In the early 1970s Bella Abzug (Democrat-NY) introduced a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives to ban employment and housing discrimination against lesbians and gays. Although the bill did not pass, it has been introduced, in one form or another, in every session of Congress since then.

After several years, housing discrimination was dropped from the bill in hopes that a more narrowly focused bill might have a better chance of passing. In that form it came to be called the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a national civil rights organization, has been the chief sponsor, and Barney Frank (Democrat-MA) has been the author of the bill for a decade or more.

In the early 1990s civil rights groups began to urge that transgendered people be added to the bill. They asked that employment discrimination against transgendered people be prohibited by ENDA. Barney Frank and the HRC have long argued vigorously against this addition to ENDA. They say, primarily, that adding transgendered people to the bill would kill the chance of its passage.

Recently, however, HRC released the results of a poll that they conducted on the public's attitudes towards transgendered people. The results were interesting. For example, according to the poll:

- ♦ 77 percent of the public believe that transgender students should be allowed to attend public schools

Continued on page 5

Fix the Deficit Problem

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

This month we are asking you to write to the members of the state Assembly about the state's budget deficit. We hope you will ask them to protect the health budget, even if that requires raising taxes.

According to the State Legislative Analyst, California faces a state budget deficit of at least \$21 billion. Others say the deficit could reach \$30 billion. Our state Constitution prohibits the state government from having a budget deficit. Therefore the budget gap must be closed by either increasing revenue (raising taxes) or by cutting costs (cutting state programs).

Governor Davis has called a special session of the legislature and submitted an interim proposal for closing the budget gap. His proposal suggests an immediate \$2 billion reduction in the state's various public health programs for the poor, with more cuts to come in the future. His proposal suggests immediate cuts to other programs as well. The governor has said he will not suggest tax increases.

How serious would these cuts be to the state's health programs? These programs provide health insurance to millions of poor Californians. If the state's health programs are drastically reduced, many of the poor and their children will have to go without health-care. According to Anthony Wright, Executive Director of Health Access (a coalition of 200 healthcare consumer organizations), cuts to healthcare programs proposed by the governor would mean over 1 million Californians would be denied access to needed care. These programs provide treatment and medicine for HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, heart problems, and other serious diseases. For many people, this care means the difference between living and dying.

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Return Those Letters!

Are you sometimes unsure where to send your signed letters? Sometimes people assume they should send the letters they receive from Lambda Letters directly to the people to whom the letters are addressed. For example, a letter addressed to Assembly-member Darrell Steinberg should be sent to him, right?

Actually, no. Each month we count the number of letters we generate on each of the bills covered by that month's mailings. Often it is a powerful lobbying tool to be able to tell legislators just how many letters we generate on a particular bill. The only way we can compile an accurate count of those letters is to have them first sent to us. When we receive them we count them and then send them promptly to your legislators.

This process also helps us keep our mailing list lean and effective. If we don't receive any signed letters from a member in two months we write the member and ask if he or she is still interested in our services. If we get no response, we inactivate the member. Many of you contribute to Lambda Letters. Controlling our mailing list this way helps us to use your donations wisely and avoid needless printing and postage costs.

So when you sign your letters each month, please return them to us in the self-addressed return envelope enclosed with your newsletter and sample letters.

###

Annual Meeting in January

You are cordially invited to Lambda Letters' annual meeting. It occurs on Saturday, January 25, 2003, at 9:30 am. Until now we have always met in Sacramento. To make it easier for our Southern California members to attend, we will hold the meeting at the Uptown Faith Community Service Center, 2214 Fifth Ave. (@ Ivy St.) in San Diego. We must have a quorum of one-third the membership (in person or by proxy) to conduct business. If you are unable to attend, please return the enclosed proxy right away. If you are unsure, return the proxy anyway; you can always revoke your proxy and vote in person at the meeting.

###

LGBT Issue

Continued from page 4

- ◆ 61 percent feel the country needs laws to protect transgender people from discrimination
- ◆ 57 percent think, incorrectly, that it is already illegal to fire people because they are transgendered
- ◆ As many as 48 percent say they would have "no problem" working with a transgendered person
- ◆ Only 8 percent claim they would not be willing to work with a transgendered person

The HRC and Representative Frank continue to oppose the addition of transgendered people saying it would kill the bill. Get real folks! This bill has languished in Congress for 30 years. There is no place for this bill to go except up. Adding transgendered people long ago could not have made its chances worse. However, it would have promoted discussion of that community in Congress and among the public. There could have been many years of discussion if the bill had been amended years ago. That discussion process almost always leads to educating people and reducing misconceptions and bigotry.

Clearly, with Republican majorities in both houses of Congress this year, ENDA will go nowhere. Adding transgendered people to the bill this year won't reduce its prospects for passage but it will create an opportunity for education and enlightenment.

Please write to Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director of the HRC, and urge her to advocate for the addition of transgendered people to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

###

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January Legislative Update

Legislators began introducing their bills for 2003 in late December 2002. Here are some of the more interesting ones we want you to know about.

HIV/AIDS Issue

AB 4 (Wilma Chan, D-Oakland)

Purpose: To increase personal income tax rates beyond the present maximum of 9.3 percent for that portion of the taxable income of an individual that exceeds \$130,000 and for that portion of taxable income of married taxpayers filing jointly that exceeds \$260,000.

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Support. This will reduce the pressure to cut important health programs.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Issues

AB 17 (Christine Kehoe, D-San Diego)

Purpose: To prohibit any state agency from entering into a contract for the acquisition of goods or services with a vendor or contractor that does not offer benefits to domestic partners of employees, as defined, that are equal to benefits offered to employees with spouses, except as otherwise specified.

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 18 (Mark Leno, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To ensure that nothing in the state's Fair Employment and Housing Act shall be construed to prohibit any city, county, or other political subdivision of the state from providing or maintaining greater protections against discrimination than those provided by the Act.

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Support. This might allow cities and counties to specifically ban discrimination against transgendered people.

People of Color Issues

AB 9 (Mervyn Dymally, D-Compton)

Purpose: To establish at the Charles R. Drew Univer-

sity of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles the Urban Community Health Institute, Centers to Eliminate Health Disparities (to be operated in conjunction with the Regents of the University of California and the University of California at Los Angeles) to address disparities in the delivery of health services to multicultural populations in specified areas of Los Angeles County.

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 30 (Keith Richman, R-Granada Hills)

Purpose: To require the state to expand the Healthy Families Program to provide health insurance coverage to employed, childless adults who are uninsured for healthcare coverage and who meet certain household income requirements, subject to approval of a federal waiver and appropriation of state-matching funds.

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Support

AB 54 (Jenny Oropeza, D-Carson)

Purpose: To require the California Research Bureau, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to contract with an independent evaluator to conduct a study of the availability and effectiveness of cross-cultural training for public school teachers and administrators. The bill would require the study to focus on 10 culturally diverse schools that reflect the diverse demography and geography of California and would prescribe criteria for selecting those schools.

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 59 (Mervyn Dymally, D-Compton)

Purpose: To establish the California Commission for the Preservation of African American History, Culture. It would require the commission to conduct public hearings to identify the contributions of African Americans to California's history and culture, chronicle the



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activities of African Americans who have made significant contributions to the history and culture of California in all fields of endeavor, and identify institutions and places of significance in the contributions of African Americans to the history and culture of California and provide for the placement of an appropriate marker at these sites.

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 62 (Rudy Bermudez, D-Bellflower)

Purpose: To allow a person to apply for a special set of commemorative, reflectorized license plates jointly honoring Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez, and would require the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue those special license plates in lieu of regular license plates. The bill would require those license plates to be of a distinctive design, containing both the names "Martin Luther King Jr." and "Cesar Chavez."

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 4 (Dennis Hollingsworth, R-Riverside)

Purpose: Commencing with taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2003, to reduce all marginal tax rates, as provided, and to eliminate the tax on taxable income and the alternative minimum tax for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2007.

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Oppose. The tax cuts are unreasonable when the state is considering massive cuts to education and health programs.

SB 24 (Liz Figueroa, D-Fremont)

Purpose: To require the Department of Health Services to make it easier for poor people to qualify for healthcare coverage by implementing a seamless, coordinated healthcare program. It would enable participating healthcare providers to screen and initiate an accelerated enrollment process for eligible individuals into the Medi-Cal program or the Healthy Families Program at the time medical care is provided. The bill would require the department to exercise its option under federal law and submit the necessary federal waiver to allow providers to engage in this process.

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Support.

Women's Issues

AB 23 (Joe Nation, D-San Rafael)

Purpose: To state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that requires healthcare providers to accept and support specified rights of mammography patients, and that these patients accept specified responsibilities.

Status: Introduced.

LLP Position: Support.

ACR 6 (Rebecca Cohn, D-Campbell)

Purpose: To proclaim October 2003 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Status: Introduced.

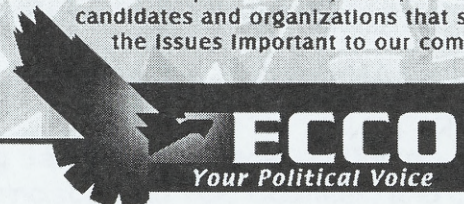
LLP Position: Support. ###

ECCO is pleased to support the Lambda Letters Project.

ECCO is proud to be a part of
the activist LGBT community.
When we work together, we can
accomplish anything.

The Elections Committee of the County of Orange (ECCO) is a non-partisan Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, HIV/AIDS, and Women's political action committee serving Orange County and Long Beach, California.

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Read State Bills Online

The Lambda Letters Project's Web site lists legislation that we think is important to know about but including the actual text of legislation would duplicate the work that the state legislature already does by posting the text of legislation on its Web site. Right now you can view copies of the bills introduced in the Assembly and Senate for the 2003-04 session.

Because the Web address of the page that shows you bill information is so long, we have created this shortcut to it:

http://snurl.com/ca_senate_bills

This should take you to a page with "Bill Information" near the top. In the paragraph of text in the center of the page is the underlined word "Index." Click this link to go to the Bill Index page. Under the Assembly Bill Index heading click the first link, "2003-2004 sorted sequentially by Bill Number." On the plain-text page called "2003-2004 Assembly Bills Sorted By Bill Number," browse through the bill titles in the Topic column to find subjects that interest you. For example, AB 23 has the title "Breast Cancer." Jot down any bill numbers you want to learn more about.

Now click the Back button on your browser to go back to the previous Bill Index page. Scroll down the list to the Senate Bill Index portion and click on the first link, "2003-2004 sorted sequentially by Bill Number." Again, scroll through the list of senate bills and jot down any bill numbers that interest you.

After you've compiled your list of bill numbers, click the Back button until you're back at the original Bill Information page that you started at. Scroll down to the Bill Number text box and enter the bill number you're interested in. Don't enter "AB" or "SB"; just enter the number. Click the Search button. This takes you to a page that lists the bill number, its subject, and the author. In the case of entering "23" as a search item, the page shows links to AB 23 (about breast cancer) and SB 23 (beverage containers) Click on the appropriate legislative number.

The next page shows links to various documents related to the bill: status, history, etc. Scroll down to the Bill Text area and click on the HTML link. If you prefer, you can click on the PDF link to view the text in Adobe Acrobat format. Now you can read the text of the bill and learn more about legislation that may affect you or others you know. This powerful tool is a great way for you to keep tabs on what government does.

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People of Color Issue

Continued from page 4

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 41 million Americans are without healthcare insurance. The problem is getting worse: 1.4 million lost their insurance in 2001 alone. Some people think increases in the uninsured occur only during economic downturns, such as we have experienced in the last three years. However, the Census Bureau reports that the number of Americans without health insurance increased dramatically even in the boom years of the 1990s. In 1990, 32.9 million Americans had no health insurance. That number went up steadily during the 1990s and now over 41 million people are without health insurance.

Most of those without insurance work in low-paying, service-sector jobs. Typically their employers don't provide employee health insurance. Because their wages are so low, employees cannot afford to buy private insurance. For a family of four, private insurance could easily cost \$900-\$1,000 a month. Even families with two minimum-wage earners cannot afford those premiums.

So here's how it is. There is a body of people who work in high-wage jobs. They can afford to buy their own insurance but they don't have to because their employers usually provide it. To be honest, as a state government retiree, I belong to this group. We could attack the budget deficit by increasing income taxes on the most wealthy. People like me. For them the increased taxes would be an annoyance, but life would still be very good.

On the other hand, we have a large body of people who work in low-paying jobs. They cannot afford to pay for health insurance and their employers usually do not provide it. We could balance the budget by cutting the public health programs which they often desperately need. However, this would be an extreme hardship on people whose lives are already very difficult.

So you be the judge. How should we deal with the budget crisis? I am going to write to our legislators asking them to do it by increasing income taxes on those with the greatest income. I will urge them not to cut public health programs. We hope you will do the same.

###

Join Our E-mail Alert Team

Continued from page 1

through the Post Office. Each alert contains background information on a bill and a sample letter. The alert also contains the e-mail addresses of the legislators who need to hear from us. Most people simply copy and paste the information we provide into their own e-mail messages.

People tell us it takes just five minutes to respond to each alert. During 2002 the number of alerts per month ranged from 4 in February to 32 in August.

Each e-mail message also contains a link to the bill discussed in the alert. If they so choose, people can click on the link to see the actual copy of the bill online. This allows them to read the bill and determine more accurately whether they agree with Lambda Letters' position on it.

This is an exciting way for you to make an immediate and powerful impact on legislation that affects your daily life. If you would like to receive our e-mail alerts, just send a message to LambdaLP@aol.com and ask to be added to the e-mail alert list.

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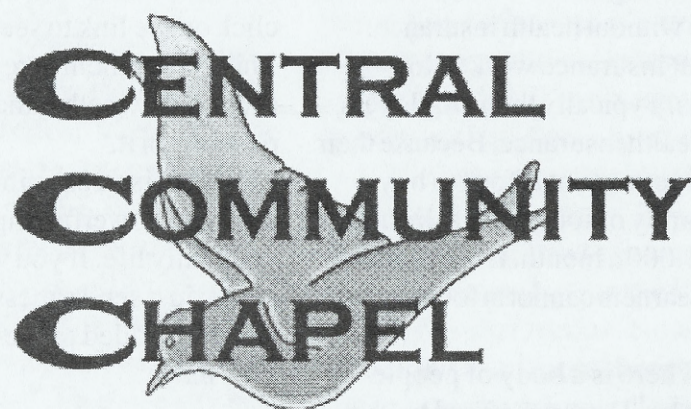
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